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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 19 March 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to the candidature of the Republic of Albania to the Human Rights Council for the term 2015-2017 at the elections scheduled to be held during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 2014 in New York.

In accordance with the decision of the Government of the Republic of Albania and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251, I have the honour to transmit herewith the updated voluntary pledges and commitments, reaffirming Albania's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights and its active engagement in the future work of the Human Rights Council (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Ferit **Hoxha**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/69/50.

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Annex to the letter dated 19 March 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Albania to the Human Rights Council, 2015-2017

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Republic of Albania has decided to put forward its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2015-2017 at the elections to be held during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 2014 in New York.

2. A Member of the United Nations since 1955, Albania has actively embraced and promoted the ideals and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Albania maintains and develops its multilateral relations based on the firm belief that respect for the principle of sovereign equality among Member States, and full applicability of norms and principles of international law in their relations, are crucial for the achievement of peace and security, development and respect for human rights.

3. The Republic of Albania remains committed to promoting multilateralism as an effective tool in the protection and promotion of human rights. Albania is further fully committed to the universal promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and supports the integration of the human rights dimension into all United Nations policies.

4. Albania conducts its foreign policy by pursuing an active role in the region, in promoting good-neighbourly relations and peaceful settlement of disputes, with a view to ensuring a safe environment for respect for, and protection and promotion of, human rights.

5. Ever since embracing democracy and political pluralism in the early 1990s, Albania has come a long way in the fight for recognition and promotion of, and respect for, human rights. That was accompanied by an invigorated role and new responsibilities within the United Nations system, in particular with respect to the protection and promotion of human rights at the national, regional and international levels.

6. The Albanian Constitution (1998) aims to build a fully democratic society, founded on strong guarantees for respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the principle of non-discrimination, the rule of law and the separation of powers.

7. A positive model of peaceful coexistence in a multireligious society, Albania is in the forefront of efforts to promote dialogue and understanding between cultures and civilizations, with a view, inter alia, to better promoting and protecting human rights worldwide.

8. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, Albania puts forward the following voluntary pledges and commitments:

I. Promotion and protection of human rights at the national, regional and international levels

9. Respect for, and protection and promotion of, human rights have taken centre stage in Albania's foreign policy priorities. The Republic of Albania is committed to further advancing its national and international policies for the protection and promotion of human rights, both as a national priority and as a pivotal part of Albania's foreign policy.

10. The Republic of Albania is a party to all core United Nations and regional human rights treaties and instruments, which are directly transposed into the Albanian legislation and have superiority over national laws that are not compatible with them. Their implementation is monitored by a system of different organs and institutions, including an independent national human rights institution, the Office of the People's Advocate.

11. A major legislative reform has been carried out to ensure full compliance with the relevant provisions of the ratified international treaties and instruments. Albania will continue to comply with its international human rights obligations, and it has been regularly submitting reports to the relevant treaty bodies.

12. The Republic of Albania remains strongly committed to the Universal Periodic Review mechanism as a crucial achievement and novelty of the reform process of the United Nations human rights system. As a valuable instrument of dialogue on human rights issues at the national level, the follow-up of the Universal Periodic Review process is expected to provide for meaningful progress in national human rights policies and practice.

13. The Republic of Albania, for the first time, was under review in December 2009, while 85 recommendations were made under the Universal Periodic Review process. The Republic of Albania will continue to support that process and will ensure an effective follow-up to the Review's recommendations. Albania has prepared its second national report and will duly cooperate with the Council during the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, due in April 2014.

14. The Republic of Albania will continue to duly cooperate with and support the Council's subsidiary bodies and mechanisms. In December 2009, Albania extended a standing invitation to all special procedures, and it is convinced that their expertise, professionalism and independence can further strengthen national action and contribute to the implementation of international obligations.

15. Since the establishment of the Council, the country has been visited by two human rights mechanisms. Albania pledges to continue working with special procedure mandate holders in implementing their recommendations, and to further discuss and disseminate the recommendations among relevant authorities, civil society and also the general public.

16. The Republic of Albania attaches great importance to the independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its role in promoting and protecting human rights worldwide.

17. Albania has actively contributed to the establishment of the Human Rights Council and its activity ever since, and it is committed to an effective Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, with a leading role in addressing human rights

violations and promoting human rights. Albania's vision of the Human Rights Council encompasses a body able to respond promptly, effectively and in a timely manner to gross human rights violations.

18. It is with this understanding that, during the Council's review process in 2011, Albania reaffirmed its principled position on the need for specific actions aimed at strengthening that important body. To that end, Albania strongly campaigned for the possibility of providing all candidates to the Council with an inclusive and equitable platform for the presentation of voluntary pledges and commitments to the promotion and protection of human rights.

19. In the same vein, Albania will continue to promote human rights within the wider United Nations system, including in carrying on its active engagement in the work of the General Assembly and the Third Committee.

II. Voluntary commitments of the Republic of Albania

20. In connection with its candidacy to the Human Rights Council, the Republic of Albania undertakes to:

- Continue to work for the universality and indivisibility of human rights;
- Be guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity in its activity, in case it is elected to serve in the Council;
- Uphold the universality of the Universal Periodic Review and non-selective recommendations for all States under review, which should take into account the level of development of States;
- Pursue its belief in the full enjoyment of human rights by all and the agenda for protecting the human rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities;
- Continue to support initiatives at the regional and international levels in combating intolerance and discrimination based on religion, ethnicity or nationality or on any other basis;
- Continue to strongly support, in a constructive manner, initiatives aiming at fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue;
- Continue to support the strengthening of the United Nations human rights system infrastructure, including boosting the Human Rights Council's capacity to effectively respond to gross human rights situations;
- Strengthen cooperation with the Human Rights Council and its special procedures, as well as all other relevant United Nations mechanisms on human rights;
- Work constructively and in a cooperative and responsible manner with all members of the Council, and all States Members of the United Nations, in fulfilling the mandate of the Human Rights Council;
- Enhance cooperation with the United Nations and all relevant regional organizations on issues related to the promotion and protection of human rights;

- Work towards further advancement of international human rights norms and standards, as might be further necessary;
- Strengthen efforts to promote gender equality and the rights of the most vulnerable groups, including children and persons with disabilities;
- Strengthen the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons and ensure their active participation in society;
- Continue to work towards including a human rights perspective in the post-2015 development agenda.

21. With a view to strengthening the protection of human rights at the national level, the Republic of Albania further undertakes to:

- Continue to promote a human-rights-based approach through a better integration of human rights, both in the decision-making process and in policy implementation
- Continue to ensure that respect for, and protection and promotion of, the rights of minorities will continue to remain a priority at the national level
- Continue to implement the Roma Strategy 2010-2015 and its Action Plan
- Further promote open and sincere dialogue between the Government and the civil society in efforts aiming to improve human rights at the national and international levels
- Uphold the independence of national human rights institutions, including the People's Advocate, the Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and the Office of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, in line with the Paris Principles
- Work with the civil society and non-governmental organizations to promote public policies that guarantee respect for human rights
- Implement necessary reforms aimed at ensuring the existence of a functional and efficient judiciary for the promotion and protection of human rights
- Continue to focus efforts on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and the rights of the most vulnerable groups, including children, girls, persons with disabilities, older persons, refugees and migrants
- Implement relevant laws and develop further policies to combat violence against women and girls in all its forms

Enclosure

Albania is a party to the following relevant international instruments:

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights
2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
4. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
5. Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
6. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
7. Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity
8. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
9. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
10. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
11. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
12. Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
13. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
14. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
15. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
16. Convention on the Rights of the Child
17. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
18. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
19. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure

Albania is a party to the following relevant Council of Europe instruments:

1. Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
2. Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
3. Protocol No. 2 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, conferring upon the European Court of Human Rights competence to give advisory opinions
4. Protocol No. 3 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 29, 30 and 34 of the Convention
5. Protocol No. 4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, securing certain rights and freedoms other than those already included in the Convention and in the first Protocol thereto
6. Protocol No. 5 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending Articles 22 and 40 of the Convention
7. Protocol No. 6 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty
8. Protocol No. 7 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
9. Protocol No. 8 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
10. Protocol No. 11 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, restructuring the control machinery established thereby
11. Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
12. Protocol No. 13 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances
13. Protocol No. 14 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, amending the control system of the Convention
14. European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
15. Protocol No. 1 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
16. Protocol No. 2 to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
17. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

18. European Agreement relating to Persons Participating in Proceedings of the European Court of Human Rights
19. Convention on Contact concerning Children
20. Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
21. Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
22. European Convention on the Legal Status of Children born out of Wedlock
23. European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights
24. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
25. European Convention on Extradition
26. Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition
27. Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition
28. Third Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition
29. European Convention on Information on Foreign Law
30. European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism
31. Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism
32. European Agreement on the Transmission of Applications for Legal Aid
33. Additional Protocol to the European Agreement on the Transmission of Applications for Legal Aid
34. Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons
35. European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes
36. Anti-Doping Convention
37. Civil Law Convention on Corruption
38. Criminal Law Convention on Corruption
39. Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters
40. Convention on Cybercrime
41. Fourth Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Extradition